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Georgia Southern University Athletics



Football Camp: Eagles Looking for Big Plays from Special Teams

The season opener at West Virginia is less than a month away.

Marc Gignac

Football

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STATESBORO, Ga. – Whether it's spring or fall, preseason or in-season, the beginning of the Georgia Southern football practice plan hardly ever changes. Pre-practice, stretch and then special teams.

Or as they like to call them at Georgia Southern - special forces. It's not a place for the third and fourth stringers to earn their stripes and make their way onto the 2-deep. Coach [Willie Fritz](#) and the Eagles want their special forces to be a weapon. A way to score points, flip the field position, create turnovers, make big plays and swing the momentum.

For the first couple of games last season, the special forces were playing well. But the kicking and punting game faded a bit as the year went on, and though they did not give up many big plays in that phase of the game, they didn't make as many as they would like either.

"We need to do a better job of punting and kicking, and we need to get better in the return game," said Fritz. "We started off the season really well and then kind of faded at the end of the year with our accuracy or our distance. We also had 17 penalties on special teams, and that's 17 too many."

With their top two kickers, long snappers and kick returners back from a season ago, and a host of guys with speed and athleticism ready to fill in on punt return, the Eagles expect more from the special forces this year. They are working on them for multiple practice periods each and every day of preseason camp.

"Coach Fritz drills it every day, and a lot of it is about mental focus, knowing what your responsibilities are, mastering technique and being mentally tough," said senior receiver and return specialist [Montay Crockett](#). "I think special teams can be a real weapon for us this year."

Two sessions are scheduled for Saturday - 8:15 a.m. on the banks of Beautiful Eagle Creek, followed by Little Eagles Field Day at Paulson Stadium at 11 a.m. and a night practice is slated for Paulson Stadium at 7:45 p.m. Dates, times and locations of football practices are subject to change and may be impacted by weather conditions. Practices are open to the public, but any filming, recording or photography is limited to members of the media only.

Georgia Southern won the 2014 Sun Belt title in its first season in the league, finishing 8-0 in the conference and 9-3 overall. The Eagles return 58 lettermen and 13 starters to the 2015 squad, were picked to win the Sun Belt in the league's preseason coaches' poll and are receiving votes in the USA Today Amway Top-25 Coaches Poll.

Fans can purchase 2015 season tickets and select their seats online, by calling 1-800-GSU-WINS or by visiting the ticket office in the Cowart Building adjacent to Paulson Stadium (203 Lanier Drive). Ticket office hours are Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Season tickets prices start as low as \$75 for all six games. Season ticket sales have exceeded last year's total and are expected to reach an all-time high.

Preseason Football Practice Schedule

8/8 - 8:15 a.m. (Eagle Creek)/7:45 p.m. (Paulson) - Little Eagles Field Day at 11 a.m. at Paulson

8/9 - 7:45 p.m. - Paulson (night practice)

8/10 - 8:15 a.m.

8/11 - 8:15 a.m.

8/12 - 8:15 a.m.

8/13 - 8:15 a.m.

8/14 - 8:15 a.m.

8/15 - 9 a.m. (Paulson, Scrimmage, Meet the Eagles)

Hop on the Bus

Join the Georgia Southern Athletic Foundation for its football bus trip Sept. 4-5, and watch the Eagles take on the West Virginia Mountaineers at Milan Puskar Stadium. Click [here for more info and to register online](#).

Upcoming Events

Aug. 8 - [Little Eagles Football Field Day](#) - Paulson Stadium - 11 a.m. (registration begins at 10 a.m.) - Boys and girls, ages 6-12, can attend a free one-hour field day hosted by Coach Fritz and the Eagles at Paulson Stadium.

Aug. 13 - [Women's Football Clinic](#) - Ted Smith Family Football Center - 6 p.m. - Ladies will learn Football 101, tour the Ted Smith Family Football Center and participate in field activities. There will also be door prizes, food and beverages.

Aug. 15 - [Meet the Eagles Fan Fest](#) - Paulson Stadium - 9 a.m. - Fans can watch the final football scrimmage of preseason camp at Paulson Stadium. Concessions, the Adidas Store and inflatables for kids will be available. After the scrimmage, at approximately 11 a.m., student-athletes from the football, men's soccer, women's soccer, volleyball and cheer team will sign autographs on the North Concourse.

Aug. 17 - Day 1 - Paulson Stadium - 9 p.m. - Students will fill up the entire student section in Paulson Stadium for Day One to learn our traditions, chants, fight song and alma mater. Coach Fritz and Director of Athletics [Tom Kleinlein](#) will speak at the event.

Aug. 22 - [Erk Russell Classic](#) - Paulson Stadium - 5 p.m. - The fourth annual Erk Russell Classic has North Oconee High School taking on Coffee County at 5 p.m. and Statesboro facing Burke County at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$15 at the door.

Georgia Southern Athletics provides up-to-date information on all its sports through its official website, GSEagles.com, through social media channels facebook.com/GSAthletics, twitter.com/GSAthletics, iOS app Georgia Southern Eagles and Android app Eagles GATA. Fans can purchase tickets to Georgia Southern Athletics events by calling 1-800-GSU-WINS or by visiting GSEagles.com.

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